



IMMACULATE HEART CENTRAL SCHOOL

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Respect Life Initiative ^[1]

While our Faith Community Service ^[2] program helps students stretch themselves in service here in our immediate community, Immaculate Heart Central's **Annual Respect Life Initiative** offers a different lesson in service. This annual initiative challenges our students to answer the age-old question of "who exactly is our neighbor?"

Begun when our school raised funds to assist those suffering from the genocide in Darfur, IHC's Respect Life Initiative seeks to educate our students about the concerns of our broader global community. Since then our students have helped build wells in Central Africa, assisted AIDS orphans in Ethiopia, helped provide brighter futures for the slum children of Guatemala and Honduras, provided anti-malarial nets to hundreds of families at risk and supported the street children of Djibouti. In 2015 they established a medical fund for children in Nepal who sustain limb threatening injuries while working to help support their families.

Not only does our annual initiative call our students to action, it teaches them the tools necessary to effect change, tools limited only by their imaginations. With 10 hour fasts and 5 mile walks, with bake sales and car washes, dodge ball tournaments and badminton showdowns, our students have learned first-hand that anyone can be an instrument of change. In the process they gain confidence in their abilities to lead and inspire others while truly making a difference in someone's life.

In 2017, for their 9th Annual Respect Life Initiative, our school entered into a partnership with the **Girls Education Collaborative** (based out of Buffalo, NY) becoming a "Sister School" to the **Kitenga School for Girls** in Kitenga, Tanzania. This school is a culmination of a twenty year-old dream by the highly respected teaching order of The Immaculate Heart Sisters of Africa. In January of 2019 the school welcomed it's third class of young women bringing its current enrollment to over 100! This residential school is located in a remote area known as the Mara Region. In Mara, only 18% of female students even attend school because of the often insurmountable gender-based barriers between girls and their education. 55% of the girls in this region are married when they are still children.

The Kitenga School for Girls, however, is providing a brighter future for some truly exceptional hard-working young ladies. In Nov. of 2018 the girls in the school's inaugural class took their first set of competitive National Exams and EACH STUDENT scored in Division One out of four divisions! Their performance led their school to first place in their entire district:)

The Kitenga School for Girls now includes a library, science classrooms, and an on-site dormitory. It is an exciting new direction for our Annual Respect Life Initiative and provides our students with the chance to make a long-term difference in the lives of these young women. Your support is welcomed:)

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Links

[1] <https://www.ihcschool.org/content/respect-life-initiative>

[2] <https://www.ihcschool.org/content/faith-community-service>